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"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

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UCAPAWA News

VOL. II — NO. 2 August 25, 1941

UCAPAWA Builds Its Tobacco Division

By DONALD HENDERSON, General President

At the beginning of February of this year the National Office of the C.I.O. turned over to United Cannery Agricultural Packing and Allied Workers of America full jurisdiction of all types of tobacco workers, including stemmeries, and cigar, smoking tobacco, snuff and cigarettes.

Before this time the main tobacco locals had been chartered as Local Industrial Unions and UCAPAWA was active only in the large New York City cigar local which had been the original Sam Gompers Local of the Cigar Workers International Uniol of the A. F. of L.

55 Companies Under Contract

During the past six months UCAPAWA has gone to town in the tobacco industry. Today a strong *Tobacco Division* of UCAPAWA has been established with 15 locals, including between three and four thousand members. Contracts have been secured in a total of 55 companies covering approximately 3,500 workers.

Main Organizing Campaigns

In addition to these plants already organized, a widespread organizing campaign is under way in New York City, Camden and Newark, N. J., New Orleans, La., Detroit, Mich., Los Angeles, California, Philadelphia, Pa., Richmond, Va., and throughout Ohio.

These campaigns are taking the full or part-time work of 13 International, Local or C.I.O. organizers. The main plants of the cigar industry are being tackled, including the big plants of the five largest tobacco firms: Consolidated Cigar, Bayuk Cigar, General Cigar, American Cigar and the Diesel-Wemmer-Gilbert Corporation.

In eight of these plants bargaining rights have been won covering 3400 workers and at the present time negotiations are taking place. The Consolidated Cigar plant in Camden, N. J., with 900 workers is at present on strike.

In addition 11 other plants are in the process

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Cost of Living Again Up

U. S. Department of Labor figures just released show that by July 15 the cost of living had gone up four percent in four months.

Total rise since the war broke out in September 1939 is almost seven percent according to the release.

Where to Get Figures

The government publishes monthly cost of living figures for twenty large cities and every three months figures for a total of thirty-three cities. Many local public libraries can supply these figures.

Details on the cost of living figures can be obtained from this office (UCAPAWA in Chicago). Locals and organizers requesting such information should state exactly the purpose for which the figures are needed. This will help in getting you the best available information.

These general government figures measuring the average cost of living of certain wage earners in large cities are undoubtedly minimum figures. For many people, cost of living has gone up considerably more than is indicated by the government figures. This is especially true of rents.

Local 47 Pickets for Dues

As a result of a dues picket line Libbey McNeill's cannery at Blue Island, Ill., is now 100 percent UCAPAWA. This paves the way for a union shop contract next year.

First celebration since the unification of all workers in the plant was a Sunday picnic which featured dancing and free pop and cracker jack for the kids.

UCAPAWA locals 81, 179 and 297 in Toledo have been awarded place of honor in the Toledo Labor Day parade.

Local 81 which won first prize for its 1940 float is to lead the parade.

The UCAPAWA NEWS

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Legislation and Government

Shall We Let Congress Cut Wages?

Latest threat to the livelihood of the American people is the proposed Federal Tax bill.

The tax bill is now in a Senate Committee and by the time you get this paper may be up for vote in the Senate.

CIO members and unions are fighting heavier taxes on wage earners by asking their Senators to lower taxes on workers and to support bigger taxes on the rich.

President Donald Henderson in his letter to UCAPAWA locals pointed out that the clear-cut issue is whether taxes are "to be raised by lowering the living standards of the people, or by cutting down the enormous incomes of wealthy corporations and individuals."

Have YOU told your Senators how you feel on this matter? Messages from back home make Senators in Washington think twice before voting against the people.

Pecan Shellers Celebrate

Several thousand people in San Antonio, Texas, will participate in the big Labor Day celebration being planned by Local 172.

Members of the Catholic faith will start the day at a Communion Breakfast in honor of Archbishop Lucey. Then after a meeting addressed by a number of labor leaders, the celebration will continue in a park with dancing, games and refreshments.

Vincente Lombardo Toledano, leader of the Latin-American labor movement, and prominent CIO leaders are sending greetings for the Local 172-CIO Yearbook which is the Labor Day souvenir.

Members of Local 172 are for the most part Spanish speaking peoples, who work at pecan shelling.

UCAPAWA Builds Its Tobacco Division

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of organization. A total of over 900 workers are employed in these 11 plants.

Diesel-Wemmer-Gilbert

The organizing campaign conducted in Detroit and Ohio was principally in the six plants of the Diesel-Wemmer-Gilbert Cigar Co. UCAPAWA and the United Electrical and Radio Workers Union working together have won Labor Board elections in all six plants of the company.

A company-wide strike shutting down all six plants of this company employing 2200 workers forced a consent election which was won by a vote of 1204 to 504 in five of the plants and by 237 to 17 in the sixth plant. Today negotiations are being conducted for a company-wide contract which will be retroactive in all its provisions to July 26.

Main concentration of the International Union so far has been on the cigar branch of the industry. However, a foothold has been gained in the stemmeries in Richmond, Va., in preparation for tackling the giant cigarette factories later.

The Union is also engaged in forcing the P. Lorillard Co. to negotiate a satisfactory contract at its Middletown, Ohio, plant which makes many famous brands of smoking tobacco.

Tobacco Division Conference Necessary

Within the next month or six weeks a conference of the Tobacco Division of UCAPAWA must be held to consolidate the leadership in this field of our union and to study the problems of furthering the organizational work already begun.

Although a successful basis of organization has been laid in the tobacco industry the main plants of the bigger cigar companies still remain to be tackled, while nothing has been done as yet on the even larger cigarette companies.

Without neglecting the main job of the food processing industry, the grain processing plants, etc., UCAPAWA has already shown it can do this job. The tobacco industry has long been one of the worst paying industries in the country and it has long had the added difficulty of a phoney A. F. of L. Union which is notorious for the company union tactics and contracts its leaders force down the throats of the tobacco workers.

UCAPAWA will continue to push its organizing work in the tobacco industry until the entire setup is CIO and decent wage levels and working conditions are established.

Food Industry Profits

Profits of 12 big food companies jumped from $17,561,000 in the three months April-June, 1940, to $18,464,000 in the 1941 April through June quarter.

This recent increase of almost five per cent in food industry profits was disclosed by the Associated Press in its survey of quarterly profits of the biggest corporations.

Camden Set for 100% Union Shops

Drive for 100 percent union shops in Camden was launched at a conference of Executive Board members and stewards of Local 80 on August 6.

Plans were laid for bringing in everyone department by department, until all are paying their share of the freight.

John Tisa, business agent, in outlining the job of building a strong local pointed out that "signing the application and collecting the initiation fee is just the first step in the process of making a good union member."

Rival Wages Up

Rival Food division of Local 1 signed a new contract providing for increases of 10c per hour for girls and 12c for men. Minimum scales are now 2½c higher than those prevaling in the Chicago stockyards.

Negotiations were led by John Sopocy.

Cotton Compresses Sign

Cotton Compress Local No. 254 in Fresno, Tulare and San Joaquin Valley, California, has just signed a preferential shop agreement with Western Compress Co. Minimum wages run from 60c to 80c an hour.

Virginia Tobacco Workers Make Gains

By BOB HIMMAUGH, International Repr.

A modified Union Shop contract has just been signed with Export Tobacco Co., Richmond, Va., and Local 350 for its 700 employes in stemmery and storage plant. Bargaining rights were won for the big leaf plant which employs 500 in addition.

Immediately after the contract was signed an organizing committee was set up to head the drive for a 100 percent shop. Committee members are Brothers Bennie Rouse and Matt Scruggs and Sisters Pearl Winston and Louise Rouse and International Representative Bob Himmaugh.

The Virginia Organizing Committee composed of one member from each of the five UCAPAWA locals reports that the tobacco organizing drive in Richmond is in full swing. Inquiries about the union from unorganized workers are pouring into the office.

PROGRESS SINCE THIRD CONVENTION

(NOTE: First part of President Henderson's report on organizational progress since the Third Convention was printed in August 8 UCAPAWA NEWS. This report is concluded here.

Should any readers have missed the first part in the August 8 issue copies may be obtained by dropping a request to the UCAPAWA Chicago office.

This is important material for the membership to read and study).

By Donald Henderson, General President

The first part of the progress report showed that since the third convention last December UCAPAWA has witnessed its most rapid growth and success in organizing new plants and in increasing the number of workers protected by union contracts, and that this progress has been particularly extensive in the food processing and tobacco industries.

Within eight months UCAPAWA has won 14 Labor Board elections, increased the number of contracts by 20 percent to a total of 189 and chartered 17 new locals. Sixty-nine percent, or seven out of every 10 workers voting in elections chose UCAPAWA.

These gains are the first fruits of the streamlined organizing campaign for which the ground work was laid by the International Convention last December.

Close direction of the work by the International office, concentration on key cities and key plants and building active support for the organizing drive in every local are the chief features of the new organizational set-up.

Conferences are one of the means of developing the organizing drive. Several of these conferences were covered in the first part of the Progress Report. The report continues here beginning with the California Conference.

California Conference

After careful ground work preparation by International Secretary Harold Lane, a conference was held which mapped out a concentrated organizing campaign. Two organizers were put in charge of consolidating the union in the big Cal-San Canning plant and the California Walnut Growers plant in Los Angeles and in organizing other canning and food processing plants in the Los Angeles area. Amalgamation of all Los Angeles locals into one local was worked out and is now nearly completed. A third International Organizer was put in charge of the organizing campaign for the fresh fruit and vegetable packing industry in the Salinas area. A new court decision, largely upholding the NLRB and our union, has now opened up big possibilities here.

Sister Luisa Moreno and Frank Lopez are in charge of the organizing work in Los Angeles and Brother Paul Gardner in the Salinas area.

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Progress Since Third Convention

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In both cases arrangements for local aid in financing the organizing work were made.

Wisconsin-Minnesota Conferences

Two International Organizers, jointly supported by the locals in these two states and by the International, are in charge of campaigns mapped out at conferences of all locals with the International Officers. Concentration in Wisconsin on dairy and creamery plants and on grain processing plants in Minneapolis was decided upon.

Brother John Larson is in charge of the work in Minneapolis and Brother Joseph Quinlan in Wisconsin.

Memphis, Tenn., Conference

At two conferences held here with the locals, organizing campaigns were worked out for concentrating on cotton compressing and cotton seed oil plants and grain and feed plants.

Brother Bill Haber is in charge for the International with the locals covering all organizational expenses.

Southern States Cotton Conference

In order to consolidate the work among cotton wage workers, sharecroppers and farm tenants, a five-state conference was held. A series of campaigns was mapped out with special attention being paid to economic action on this year's cotton crop, consisting of publicity and petition campaigns and organizational work in preparation for a possible cotton picking strike this fall. The field workers are demanding 10% of the market price for cotton picking ($1.50 per day) and the sharecroppers are demanding the full market price for their share of the cotton. Petition campaigns to secure surplus foods, abolition of the poll tax, medical aid, rural rehabilitation projects, and against race discrimination are being organized.

International Vice-President Owen Whitfield and Robert Moore are in charge of the organizing campaign and activities for the International Union.

Other Drives

Organizing campaigns led either by an International Organizer or by Local leaders are going forward also in New Orleans, La.; San Antonio-Houston, Tex.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Buffalo, N. Y.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; Erie, Pa.; San Diego, Cal., and Lancaster, Pa.

Particularly noteworthy are developments in New Orleans, La., where International Organizer Willard Bishop is working with CIO Regional Director Pieper concentrating on tobacco and food plants.

Due to good work by Brother Pieper a tobacco plant which employs 650 workers was recently organized, an NLRB election won and a good contract negotiated. This plant will soon be transferred to UCAPAWA.

Finally, this report would not be complete unless it was pointed out that in following the instructions of the Third Convention, the International Office has rigidly budgeted itself and has established as separate funds the necessary monies in the General Organizing Fund, the CIO Per Capita Tax Fund, and the Publicity and Publication Fund. These monies are set aside weekly out of current income in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Problems Ahead

1. The tremendous organizational upsurge sweeping the country throughout the entire CIO is giving us many more possibilities than we can handle on our limited funds and organizers. We are moving along well but now is the time workers want to be organized and can be organized.

It is essential unless we are to be "penny wise and pound foolish" that we all get behind the Organizational Assessment. The present situation may not last long. A dollar spent now will give us many more returns than ten dollars will later.

2. The recent rapid gains in new locals, new plants, and new members presents us with a major problem of consolidating and unionizing the workers. There is a big gap between the new workers under contract and the number who are dues-paying members attending union meetings. Building the union in the plant after the contract is signed still remains a major problem in most of these new plants. Furthermore, good collective leadership from the rank and file worker in these plants must be developed. We cannot and will not nursemaid a local or plant with an International Representative permanently.

3. Unionization and education of the new membership requires greater effort on the part of everyone. The International Office has just appointed a National Educational and Publicity Director to aid the locals in this work and to get out badly needed materials. We hope and expect that all local leaders will get behind Sister Connie Anderson to the end that your local can work out the necessary educational methods and materials for the benefit of your members.

Can't Keep 'em Down

Local 68, Daily Pickle, Saginaw, Mich., elected new officers at a "grand meeting" on July 28, ironed out important grievances with management on August 2, and won **5c an hour bonus for night work** after 3:30 p. m. starting Aug. 13.

Sister Jacobi, newly elected press agent for Local 68 points out that "You've got to admit that you can't keep us down."